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Explaining the Problem Statement in the Proposal

December 16th, 2008



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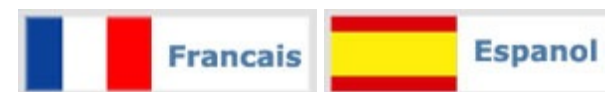
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Sometimes, we may find difficulties in writing the exact problem we intend to address in the proposed project. It happens this way that the problem we are mentioning in the [proposal](#) is not a problem at all, but is actually an effect of another problem.

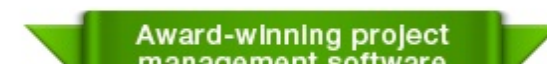


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For example, suppose there is high [child](#) mortality rate in our project area and we wish to put up a proposal on it, we cannot mention this as a problem because this is an effect of a problem, while the problem is something else. In this case, it could be the prevalence of diarrhea that is leading to high child mortality. So the problem here is “the prevalence of diarrhea” and not “high child mortality rate.”

It is also necessary to mention the cause of the problem because it is an integral part of the project implementation. In this scenario, the cause of the problem for the prevalence of diarrhea could be the “poor knowledge of the community about proper hygiene and sanitation.”

Effect>Problem>Cause

The relationship between the three (Effect, Problem and Cause) has to be outlined in the Problem Statement of the proposal. If we have an issue, it will be a good exercise to go a step back and forth to find out its cause and effect relationship. The best way to understand the cause of an issue is to ask “Why” continuously. This will help reveal the cause of the problem. A problem can have many causes and effects.

“The Why of Why”

- Projects evolve out of identified problems
- It is the problem that comes before a project
- The secret of solving a problem is proper identification of the problem. This requires a thorough investigation.
- A problem does not happen in isolation. It goes hand in hand with cause and effect.
- There is a relationship between cause and effect. They are linked by the problem.

A way to analyze a problem is through analyzing the root causes and its effects.

- State the problem as effectively and precisely as possible
- Refer to any [research](#) data that is available, including publications, reports, newspapers etc.
- Give a narration of community perception with quotes.
- Check back how well it matches with the [donor](#) guidelines or issues.
- Give thorough background information about the region, community and resources available.
- Explain the organizational strength and capacity in countering this problem and achieving long-term results.

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Resource Guide: Questions Answered on How to Write Proposals – A Basic Guide on Proposal Writing for NGOs

July 2012

This resource guide was created in collaboration with Philantropia Inc, Philantropia Inc., an international fundraising consulting firm, helps organizations around the world to more effectively raise funds. <http://www.philantropia.org>

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